

**EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH FROM START TO FINISH**  
**"Part I: Possessing Every Spiritual Blessing In Christ"**  
**(Ephesians 1:1-3)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A number of spiritual movements are coming of age in America in which people are claiming to gain God's fullness of blessing:

(1) A week ago, some of my family watched the "Hard Copy" television program about the "Toronto Blessing" movement.

The meeting of such a group starts out with loud, rock-type music with hundreds of people getting emotionally affected by the atmosphere created. After they have reached a high pitch of fervor, the service shifts to the speaker's emphasis. All over the place, young people begin to fall down in epileptic-type fits, or start weeping or feeling very sad or laughing long and uncontrollably.

Nadine who watched the show reported to me that a psychologist from Ohio who studied this movement commented in the program that it appears that a real **spirit** is affecting this behavior!

The movement has been partly transplanted to Pensacola, Florida and is known there as the "Pensacola Blessing."

(2) For many years, a group of Christians have suggested that believers need the "Second Blessing" of the Baptism **IN** the Holy Spirit following their salvation. According to the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p. 40, though Paul says all believers were baptized **BY** the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:13 of the King James Version, believers need to be baptized **IN** the Holy Spirit as the King James Bible translates it in Acts 1:4-6 and 11:16. This event allegedly includes the experience of speaking in tongues.

[Pastor Shell has checked and found the **Greek** New Testament uses the **same** words, "*en pneumatī*" translated **either** as "**by** the Spirit" or "**in** the Spirit" in these phrases in **both** 1 Corinthians 12:13 **and** Acts 1:4-5 **and** Acts 11:16. Yet, the belief persists because of the accompanying *experiences* of "tongues" speaking, "being slain in the spirit," etc. that are associated with those who hold this interpretation!]

**Well, with so many believers today claiming that WE miss out on God's fullness of spiritual blessing by not being baptized IN the Holy Spirit with "tongues speaking", or not being "slain in the Spirit" or struck with "holy laughter" as in the Toronto or Pensacola "blessings", ARE we indeed missing out? How do we get the fullness of God's spiritual blessings today?!**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need:** "In Toronto and Pensacola, believers claim they've received God's 'holy laughter' fullness like others have a 'Second Blessing' [after salvation] of the Baptism of the Spirit with tongues speaking. Well, I knew great joy when I first believed in Christ, but I never had what these folk claim! Did I miss out or have I lost something?"*

- I. **Paul taught that the Ephesian believers were blessed by God the Father with every spiritual blessing in heaven in Christ, Eph. 1:1-3.**
- II. **This description of such blessings addresses our "Need" section question on obtaining God's spiritual blessings (as follows):**
  - A. Paul taught that God the **Father** has given believers **every spiritual blessing** in Christ, Eph. 1:3a. Since **ALL** of one's spiritual blessings come from the **Father**, he need **not seek** them from the **Holy Spirit**.
  - B. Paul noted that **all** spiritual blessings from the Father are given to the believer "**in Christ**", Ephesians 1:3b. Thus, no believer needs to seek to possess more of God's spiritual blessings after he is saved!
    1. The expression "in Christ," as it appears in the New Testament pictures one who has accepted Christ as his Savior without any other conditions involved, cf. Romans 16:7c et al.
    2. Since **all** of the believer's spiritual blessings reside **in Christ**, a position gained upon faith in the Gospel, **no FURTHER** blessing needs to be added after one is saved for the believer's spiritual benefit other than his taking full advantage of what he **has** in Christ!
  - C. **All** of the spiritual blessings the believer has in Christ exist within the **heavenly** sphere, so these blessings can **not be lost**, but **are eternal**.
    1. The phrase "in the heavenlies" is unique to the Ephesian Epistle, used five times in 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10 and 6:12, B.K.C., N.T., p. 616.
    2. In the context, this reference is a **critique** on *Ephesian paganism*:
      - a. The Ephesian cult myth held that Jupiter sent down **FROM heaven** the image of the Ephesian goddess, Diana, Acts 19:35.
      - b. In reality, this descended object may well have been a comet that landed in the area, cf. Zond. Pict. Ency. Bib., vol. One, p. 341.
      - c. So, to **counter** this pagan preoccupation with an **earthly cult** connected to an **alleged heavenly origin**, five times Paul referred to the Christian's riches that were **currently WITHIN** the **non-transitory heavenly** realms, Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; Bib. Know. Com., N.T., p. 616.

3. Thus, when Paul taught the **Christian** was blessed with **every spiritual** blessing in the **HEAVENLIES**, he meant to **contrast** blessings that are **eternal** to the **temporal, earthly Diana** cult!
  - a. Paul's preaching at Ephesus undermined the Diana cult's sale of idols, creating an economic threat and an uproar, Acts 19:23-29!
  - b. So, **contrary** to the **insecurity** of an **earthly** religion's existence, Paul showed the **eternality** of Christianity's **heavenly** blessings!
- D. Paul taught that the spiritual blessings the believer has in Christ are unaffected by **sinful failure**, meaning a believer does not have to **seek** to **regain** God's **spiritual blessings** even if he has **backslidden into sin!**
  1. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers about their spiritual blessings, some of them were **then** actually **practicing SIN!**
    - a. Paul told these believers not to grieve the Holy Spirit, Eph. 4:30.
    - b. This order, a **present** imperative with a **subjunctive** negation in the adverb orders to **stop** what was **occurring**, UBS Grk. N.T., p. 673; Dana & Mantey, A Man. Gram. of the Grk. N.T., p. 301.
  2. Since some of these believers **sinned while** sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) **and THUS while ALSO** possessing every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3), these blessings were **not lost** by acts of sin!
- E. Well, if one **still has ALL** of God's spiritual blessings **while** he **sins**, those blessings are **NOT themselves experienced**, but their **EFFECTS** are experienced when he obeys God, Gal. 5:16-17, 19-23.

**Application:** *To enter into the fullness of all the spiritual blessings God has to offer, one must (1) believe in Christ as Savior from sin to become "in Christ", Jn. 1:11-13; Eph. 1:3. (2) Then, INSTEAD of heeding existing futile and errant ide as on the issue, simply apply part "4"'s verses in the "Lesson" section above to enjoy God's fulfillment!*

**Lesson:** *(1) God the Father has given every spiritual blessing to the believer the instant he believed the Gospel so that each blessing is tied up in Christ in the heavens to be eternally the believer's possession, and that possession is unaffected by the believer's sin even if he doesn't "feel" the blessings! (2) Thus, no believer needs to seek the Holy Spirit for more blessings, nor try to gain more than he has, nor need he fear he has lost those blessings even by sin or his failure to "feel" them. (3) Hence, all promotions for a "Second Blessing" with its "tongues speaking" or a "Toronto" or "Pensacola" blessing like "holy laughter" etc. are not needed, and are artificial. (4) God urges us to (a) confess any sins we have (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) rely on His indwelling Spirit for behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23) to (c) obey Scripture (1 Jn. 2:3-6) that we might ENJOY the FRUITS that "spin off" of our rich spiritual heritage in Christ!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

Charles Ryrie, in the introduction in his book, The Holy Spirit (p. 9-10) describes the plight that many times we are tempted to take to experience God's power and fullness in our Christian lives.

Just before an important speaking engagement tour, he came down with a bad case of laryngitis. Worried that he might not get better in time, Dr. Ryrie rushed to his doctor, hoping he would prescribe some powerful medication to solve his problem.

The doctor told him to go home, lay down and drink plenty of water and he would get better.

Ryrie writes: "But this didn't satisfy me. I thought he really wasn't doing his job well because he had not prescribed some powerful medicine. At my insistence he at last did give me some very expensive and supposedly powerful pills. But he added that the rest and forcing of fluids would do more than the medicine."

Charles Ryrie reports that he got better in time because of the rest and the fluids, not because of the expensive medicine!

Then, applying this illustration to the fads often associated with seeking God's fullness of blessing, he wrote: "**If this were a book that offered you some new and startlingly different formula for spiritual power, I am sure the sales of it would be phenomenal . . . This is not that kind of book, for there is no new and startlingly different formula for spiritual power . . . God has already provided . . . His Holy Spirit to live within . . . We flock after the preacher who has some new secret for victory, and we ignore the Holy Spirit who has been freely given to us and who wants to overflow in our lives. We do not need to have more of Him, but we do desperately need to know more of Him, and with the increased knowledge will come added faith, power, and control in our lives.**"

**We have all the spiritual blessings in Christ we will ever need. To experience God's fullness, HE just needs more of US who believe in Christ!**